

The Honorable James L. Robart

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

JOHN DOE, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD TRUMP, et al.,

Defendants.

CASE NO. C17-0178JLR

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD TRUMP, et al.,

Defendants.

CASE NO. C17-1707JLR

(RELATING TO CASE NO. C17-0178JLR)

**DECLARATION OF SOPHONIE BIZIMANA IN SUPPORT OF DOE PLAINTIFFS'
OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS**

DECL. OF SOPHONIE
BIZIMANA IN SUPPORT OF
DOE PLAINTIFFS'
OPPOSITION TO
DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO
DISMISS
(2:17-cv-00178-JLR)

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Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Sophonie Bizimana, hereby declare and state:

1. My name is Sophonie Bizimana. I am a lawful permanent resident of the United States. I am originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was admitted to the United States as a refugee in 2014.
2. My wife and children were unable to obtain travel documents to accompany me when I was admitted into the United States. I filed I-730 petitions for them to join me after I arrived in the United States.
3. My I-730 petitions for my family were approved on July 2015.
4. Since then, my wife and children completed all of the steps in the I-730 follow-to-join refugee screening process. They completed their interviews, security clearances, and medical examinations.
5. Starting in October 2017, all I-730 petitions were suspended, and nothing happened with my case for approximately four months.
6. In February 2018, my wife and children were “assured” by the International Rescue Committee (“IRC”) in Seattle, meaning that the IRC is handling their resettlement to the United States and should prepare for their arrival. The caseworker at the IRC told me to look for housing for them. To my knowledge, all that my wife and children need now are their travel documents.
7. However, my family is living in Uganda, and until now the I-730 process has been handled by the U.S. Embassy in Uganda. Now the U.S. government says that their travel must go through the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.
8. Nairobi is over 400 miles away from Kampala, and it is in another country. Because my family are refugees in Uganda, and they cannot cross the border and

1 enter Kenya without travel papers. As I understand it, my family cannot obtain
2 travel papers to go to Kenya unless the U.S. Embassy in Uganda makes a request
3 for such paperwork. To my knowledge, the U.S. Embassy in Uganda has not
4 made any such request or obtained travel papers for my family.

5 9. I contacted the office of my U.S. Senator, Maria Cantwell. Her office made an
6 inquiry on my behalf, and the U.S. Embassy in Uganda responded that my case is
7 "currently being transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi." See Ex. A.

8 10. My wife and children were only awaiting their travel documents when the case
9 was transferred to Nairobi. My family is effectively in limbo indefinitely.

10 11. Their medical examinations, which are good for only six months, have now
11 expired. And the IOM (International Organization for Migration), which does the
12 medical examinations for the refugee admissions program, has told them to wait
13 to reschedule them until we hear from the U.S. Embassy.

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16 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my
17 knowledge.

18 EXECUTED this 18th day of June, 2018, at Kirkland, Washington.

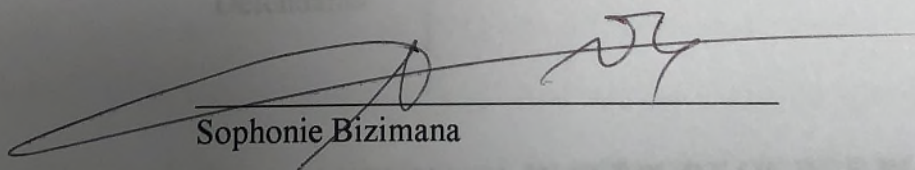
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22 Sophonie Bizimana
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EXHIBIT A

MARIA CANTWELL

UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Bizimana,

In response to my inquiry on your behalf, I have been in contact with and received the following information from the U. S. Embassy in Uganda:

Thank you for your email re: the follow-to-join refugee petition filed by Sophonie Bizimana. This case is currently being transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

As of February 1, 2018, follow-to-Join refugee case processing has been centralized at embassies or consulates offering immigrant visa services, or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) international field offices. Since the U.S. Embassy Kampala offers only non-immigrant visa services, all follow-to-join refugee cases which were previously being handled in Kampala will be forwarded to USCIS Nairobi.

Cases from Kampala will be transferred to Nairobi unless the beneficiary chooses another location from among the posts offering immigrant visa services. Here are the Visa Issuing Posts in order to confirm whether an embassy or consulate nearest to the beneficiary's residence will process the follow-to-join refugee case. If the location provides "All" visa services, then the follow-to-join refugee case can be processed there. Locations marked only as "NIV" will no longer process follow-to-join refugee cases.

Follow-to-join refugee beneficiaries may request to process their cases at another immigrant visa processing U.S. embassy or consulate other than Nairobi. If your constituent would like to have her/his case transferred to a different embassy, consulate, or USCIS international field office, then he/she will need to provide justification for the case transfer and show that the beneficiary(ies) can legally be present in the country while the case is being processed. The petitioner will first need to submit a request directly with the National Visa Center (NVC) through the Ask NVC online submission form. The petitioner should select the "How can I request to have my interview scheduled at a different U.S. Embassy overseas?" in the question dropdown list. In the box entitled "Additional comments or questions not in the above list", the petitioner should include a justification for requesting the different location and note that it is in regards to "follow-to-join refugee centralization".

USCIS Nairobi is in active discussions with their headquarters with regards to how they envision the rollout. We are not in position to schedule appointments on their behalf. We are at